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Armen Petrosyan
Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, Yerevan

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ARMEN PETROSYAN
Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, Yerevan

1. Armenia

The legends of the beginning of Armenia (ethnogonic myth) have reached us in the books of the "father of Armenian history" Movses Khorenatsi and the seventh-century writer Sebeos (Khorenatsi I 6, 9-20; Sebeos I; see Thomson 1978: 77 f.; 83 ff.; 357 ff.). According to these sources, Armenia was first inhabited by one of the youngest sons of Shem, elder son of Xisutres (Noah), and his descendants (Khorenatsi I 6). The second time Armenia was occupied by the legendary forefather of the Armenians Hayk, son of biblical Thogarma, and his descendants.

After the construction of the tower of Babel, Hayk refused to obey the deified Babylonian tyrant Bel the Titanid (identified with the biblical Nimrod), and with his large patriarchal family, consisting of three hundred men, moved to the north and settled in Armenia. Bel attacked Hayk with his huge army, but was killed in battle. Hayk is considered the eponymous patriarch of the Armenians and the Armenian autonym (self-appellation) *Hay* is derived from his name. Hayk's eldest son Aramaneak moved to the north, to the Ayrarat province and its core plain to the north of Mt. Ararat (modern name: Ararat Valley), which remains the domain of the subsequent generations of the Haykids. After several generations the second eponymous patriarch of the Armenians, Aram, through many battles enlarged Armenia's borders in all directions and created a new, powerful Armenia.

Aram's son Aray/Ara the Handsome (*Aray Gełecʻik*), eponym of the province Ayarat and Ararat Valley, ruled Armenia

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while Assyria was under the power of Šamiram (Gk. *Semiramis*), the widow of Bel's descendant Ninos. Šamiram became amorous of Ara the Handsome and tried to marry him, but he rebuffed the lascivious Assyrian queen. He was killed in battle against the Assyrians and yet was supposed to be resurrected by the mythic dog-like creatures called Aralezes, which used to lick and cure the wounds of heroes and hence to revive them. With Ara's death/resurrection, the "sacred" mythical era of the forefathers of Armenia ended and the profane human "history" began.

It is well established that naming in mythology is equivalent to the creation itself (*cf*. Petrosyan 2002: 159 ff.; 2009): in this vein, Armenian legends represent the epicised version of the creation myth. The Armenian Universe and time – countries, mountains, rivers, months and hours were named after Hayk and the first Haykids. Hayk, Aram and Ara the Handsome represent epic transpositions of the early Armenian gods: Hayk and Aram are two aspects of the thunder god, while Ara the Handsome represents the suffering figure of the son of the thunder god (the "dying god"). The adversaries of the Armenian heroes represent divine figures of Mesopotamia: e.g., Bel represents the great Babylonian god Bēl-Marduk (see Petrosyan 2002; 2007; 2009).

While speaking about the populating of Armenia by Hayk and his descendants, on several occasions, Khorenatsi refers to local stories (I 11) about various scattered peoples that used to inhabit the territory before Hayk and who willingly submitted to Hayk and Haykids (I 11). Obviously, those peoples would have been the descendants of Tarban, who populated the country several generations earlier. This could lead us to propose that the legend of the pre-Armenian inhabitants of Armenia could be traced down to the sources not only of biblical, but also of folklore origin.

2. Ireland

The legendary *Lebor Gabála Érenn* 'The Book of the Taking of Ireland' represents a compilation of stories about the origins of the peoples of Ireland (Macalister 1938-1956). According to it, Ireland was first inhabited by Cessair, a granddaughter of Noah, together with her father, Bith, and her followers. The next invasion was led by Partholón, a descendant of the biblical Magog, son of Japhet. Partholón's tribe was overcome by the Fomorians, a class of chthonic gods or demons. Later, Nemed, another descendant of Magog, "of the Greeks of Scythia," arrived to Ireland. After the

death of Nemed, oppressed by the Fomorians, some groups of the Nemedians fled from Ireland, but returned afterwards. Firstly, there were the *Fir Bolg*. Secondly, there were the *Tuatha Dé Danann* ('The People of the Danu goddess'), a godly race, who came from the north of the world in three hundred ships. In the narrative tradition developed by the Irish *literati* which carried on very strong Christian overtones, the Tuatha Dé Danann were demoted down to heroes and heroines in a way, similar to the figures of the Armenian ethnogonic myth, who were in fact the earliest Armenian gods in epic guise.

The Tuatha Dé Danann wrestled Ireland from their predecessors in the two battles of Mag Tuired (Frazer 1915; Gray 1982). On their arrival to Ireland, the first king of the Tuatha Dé Danann was Nuadu, who lost his hand in the first battle against the Fir Bolg and as a result of his disfigurement was no longer eligible to stay in kingship. Bres the Handsome, whose mother was of the Tuatha Dé Danann, and father of the Fomorians, was elected to succeed him. He failed to act as a generous and just king, was expelled and had to escape to the land of the Fomorians to seek help from his father's race. Bres returned supported with the Fomorian host, and the second great battle occurred between the Tuatha Dé Danann and the Fomorians. The leader of the Fomorians, Balor of the Evil Eye, was killed by a slingshot by Lug of All Crafts, the leader of the Tuatha Dé Danann.

The prehistory of Ireland culminates in the story of the sons of Míl, the mythic ancestors of the Irish people. They are represented as the descendants of a Scythian prince, one of the chieftains who built the Tower of Babel. Journeying through many lands they reached Ireland and wrestled it from the Tuatha Dé Danann. During this campaign Eremon was the leader of the expedition.

3. Comparison

It is difficult to say what kind of story was told by the common people about the origins of Armenia in the times of Khorenatsi and before. However, in Khorenatsi's account the influence of the Mesopotamian, Greek and Biblical sources is obvious. The figures and genealogies of the Armenian patriarchs are juxtaposed and reconciled with the Biblical genealogies and emendated with the Greek historical narratives written by the Christian authors (the

influence of the Greek tradition on the figures of the adversaries of the Armenian patriarchs is especially significant).

The Irish pseudo-historical tradition, similar to the Armenian, places the aetiological native myths together with legends of Irish origins within a Christian and biblical framework, starting from the Creation.

Myth is beyond the spatial and temporal characteristics of reality. This holds true especially for the myths of creation, which explicate the formation of space and time. However, the epicised myth can be seen as acquiring historical – spatial and temporal – characteristics. In Armenian learned tradition, two waves of occupation of Armenia are recorded. According to the Irish source of *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, Ireland was occupied several times. Theoretically these waves of settlers could reflect some historical events – the memory of the earlier tribes that inhabited the territories before the Armenian and the Irish settlers arrived. However, the stories are strongly mythicised and it is hazardous to draw univocal historical conclusions from them. The historical memory may well have been conflated there with the legends of the so-called 'magical ancient people' known to many traditions.[2]

The Armenian forefathers represent epicised figures of the early native gods who fight against the gods of Mesopotamia, their southern neighbour, while in the Irish tradition, the early gods are euhemerised as the pre-Irish inhabitants of Ireland who wrestled the island from the previous inhabitants and the autochthonous chthonic creatures (the Fir Bolg and the Fomorians) and abandoned it to the ancestors of the Irish.

The archaic heroic epic, unlike the other genres of folklore, is formed in the process of ethnic consolidation and is in a lesser degree liable to international influences (Meletinsky 1986: 62). Thus, some elements of the mythic core of the considered Armenian and Irish legends, which are to be regarded as the earliest epics, would derive from native, i.e., Indo-European myth.

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[2] For the Armenian tradition, see Petrosyan 1991; for the Irish, see Carey 1982; Kondratiev 1998. The legend of the pre-Haykid population of Armenia has been considered to be an echo of the Urartians, the ancient inhabitants of Armenia. However, this idea is only speculative. Most probably, the memory of the Hurro-Urartian tribes survived in the names of the two younger sons of Hayk, Xoṙ and Manawaz, who might be regarded as the eponyms of the Hurrians and Urartians (Petrosyan 2002: 143 f., 179 f., with bibliography).

As has been shown by Stépan Ahyan and George Dumézil, the pivotal characters of the Armenian ethnogonic legends – Hayk, Aram and Ara the Handsome – constitute an Indo-European "trifunctional" triad, associated, respectively, with the first (sovereign), the second (military) and the third (fertility, in its erotic and agricultural aspects) functions of Indo-European mythology. The characters of the opponents of Hayk, Aram, and Ara – Bel, Baršam, and Šamiram – functionally correspond to the respective Armenian heroes and also form an identical trifunctional system (Ahyan 1981: 270 f.; Dumézil 1994: 133 ff.; for the Indo-European aspects of the ethnogonic myth, see also Petrosyan 2002; 2007; 2009). The three hundred men who came to Armenia with Hayk, the embryo of the Armenian nation, as well as the three hundred ships of the Tuatha Dé Danann, led by Nuadu, can also be regarded as manifestations of the Indo-European "tripartite ideology" (Petrosyan 2002: 160).

The Indo-European associations of the Irish and, generally, Celtic myths and legends, including those which are examined in this contribution, are well known. Here I will confine myself to pointing out some works of Dumézil and his followers (Littleton 1982: 72, 92 f., 167 ff., with bibliography).

In what follows, I shall present the comparison of some central characters of the Armenian ethnogonic myth with the figures of Irish and related Welsh traditions, sometimes appealing to Indian and Greek data which may confirm the suppositions.

In my previous work I have tried to show that several Indo-European myths and epics tell the story of the opposition between the clans of the *$H_2ner(t)$-/*$ner(t)$-* 'manly' gods/heroes and their adversaries, lead by a deity suggestive of the Semitic god B'l: e.g., Ind. *Bali*, an adversary of the 'manly' Indra, Arm. *Bel*, an adversary of the 'manly' Hayk, Norse *Beli*, an adversary of Freyr, the son of the 'manly' Njördr (Petrosyan 2007; see also Petrosyan 2002: 99 ff.; 2008). These myths/epics are derived from the archaic myth of the thunder god and his adversary the serpent, leader of the group of the mythic beings, associated with the stem *deH_2nu-/*$dānu$-* 'river' (a derivative of *deH_2-/*$dā$-* 'flow').

In India, the myth of the thunder god Indra and his arch-adversary, the serpent Vr̥tra, son of Dānu (i.e., the Dānava), leader of the Dānavas, is transformed into the story of Indra, the leader of the Devas (the gods) and Bali, the leader of the Dānavas, ruler of

the Otherworld, a late incarnation of the serpent Vr̥tra. In Armenia, Hayk is the epic transposition of the Indo-European thunder god, a counterpart of Indra, while his adversary Bel and his followers and descendants would correspond to the Indian Bali and the Dānavas.

Bel, the deified king and eponym of Babylon, as briefly noted earlier, represents the Babylonian great god Bēl-Marduk. Baršam, the adversary of Aram, who in a legend recorded by the seventh century author Anania Shirakatsi is represented as the ancestor of the Assyrians/Syrians (Abrahamyan, Petrosyan 1979: 95 f.), is a truncated version of the god Baršamin, i.e., Syrian *Baʿal Šamin* 'Lord of Heaven'. The first element of the name of Baʿal Šamin is etymologically identical with the name of Bel (Semitic *bʿl* 'lord'). Thus, Aram and Baršam, second eponyms of Armenia and its southern neighbours, would represent the alloforms of Hayk and Bel, respectively (see, e.g., Petrosyan 2007: 299).

In these myths, the great gods of the Semites, who replaced the figure of the mythic serpent, figure as the functional equivalents and negative mirror-images of Hayk and Aram, respectively. Even the names of Hayk and Bel are of the same meaning ('lord'; see Petrosyan 2009a). It might be even said that Bel is the Hayk of Babylon and Baršam/ Baʿal Šamin is the Aram of Syria. In Armenian myth and epic, Mesopotamia – Babylon, Assyria, with its capital Nineveh, and Baghdad (in the epic *Daredevils of Sasun*) – appears as an equivalent of the Otherworld. That is, Bel and Baršam may also be regarded as the otherworldly counterparts of Hayk and Aram.

Khorenatsi (I 5) mentions that Bel has been identified with Ninos (represented by the historian as the contemporary of Aram) or Ninos' father by some. This genealogy, which is a failure from a historical point of view, is derived from the Classical Greek historiographic tradition, where, since Ctesias of Cnidus (c. 400 BC), the fictitious pseudo-historic figure of Ninos is represented as the first prominent king of Assyria, the founder and eponym of its capital Nineveh (Diodorus Siculus II 1.3 ff.). In the context of Armenian mythology, he would represent another alloform of Bel (Petrosyan 2002: 62). The name of Ninuas, Ninos' son, the contemporary of Ara the Handsome, too, comes from the Greek tradition (Gk. *Ninyas*).

In Wales, the goddess Dôn is the counterpart of the Irish Danu, the eponym of the Tuatha Dé Danann (for the Celtic myths,

in addition to the cited sources, see also Squire 1975; Rees and Rees 1961; Shkunaev 1991; Ellis 1992; Jones and Jones 1994). The pantheon of Welsh gods is generally agreed to be divided into two warring camps: the Children of Dôn (Plant Dôn) and the Children of Llyr. The Children of Dôn are the descendents of the goddess Dôn and god Beli, or Beli Mawr ('the Great'), the ruler of the Otherworld. These may be taken as the Celtic counterparts of the Indic Dānavas and their leader Bali. The Welsh data are confusing and univocal conclusions are not always possible. However, Beli is regarded as the father of several divine figures, Llud Llaw Ereint and Nyniaw among the number, an ancestor of whom several royal lines of Wales claimed descent.

Beli's Irish counterpart is Bile. He is also an ancestor deity, father of Míl and of the Milesians (or the Gaels – the Irish) who came from Spain, a land, frequently mentioned as an euphemism for the Otherworld (see, e.g., Squire 1975: 444). This seems to correspond with the beliefs of the Celtic Gauls, reported by Caesar (*De Bello Gallico* VI 18) that they "claim to be descended from Dis Pater," i.e., from the god of the Otherworld.

In Greek tradition, the Semitic Bēl/Ba'al is represented as Bēlos, who figures in the mythic royal genealogies of Egypt, Babylon, Assyria and Lydia. Ninos, King of Assyria, who is regarded as Bēlos' son, is succeeded by Ninyas. Bēlos, King of Egypt, son of Poseidon, is the father of Danaos, eponym of the Danaans (the Greeks who fight against the Trojans in the *Iliad*), counterparts of the Irish Tuatha Dé Danann (Petrosyan 2007). Bēlos, the King of Lydia, is represented as the grandson of Heracles, who is succeeded by his son Ninos (Herod. I 7) (see Table 1 for a full list of correspondences).

Table 1:

India	*Armenia*	*Greece*	*Wales*	*Ireland*
Bali the Great	Bel	Bēlos	Beli the Great	Bile
King of the Dānavas		King of Egypt, father of the eponym of the Danaans	Father of the Children of Dôn	Father of the adversaries of the Tuatha Dé Danann

Adversary of Indra	Adversary of Hayk, the founder of the clan of adversaries of Armenia	King, ancestor of the kings of several countries	Ancestor of native British rulers	Ancestor of the Irish
Ruler of the Otherworld	Ruler of Mesopotamia ("Otherworld")	Ruler of the Otherworld		Comes from Spain ("Otherworld")
	Succeeded by Ninos and his son Ninuas	Succeeded by Ninos, and his son Ninyas	Father of Nyniaw	

Hayk's son Aramaneak (var.: Armaneak, Armenak) figures as the eponym of the ethnonym *Armen* in Anonym (see below), while his son Aramayis (var.: Armayis) is the founder and eponym of the first capital of Armenia Armawir. Aramaneak and Aramayis, the eponyms of Armenia and its capital, whose names may be regarded as the derivatives of Aram, would embody the aspects or incarnations of Aram, the 'second Hayk', a second eponym of Armenia.

Aram, the only warlike figure of the Armenian ethnogonic myth, represents the epicised figure of the 'black' thunder god, opposed or somehow connected to the 'white', especially, IE *H_2erg'-/*arg'- 'white, shining; silvery'. Thus, his adversary Baršamin, Baršam's divine prototype, was called *spitakap'aṙ* 'of white glory' (Agathangełos 784), and his idol was "embellished with ivory, crystal and silver" (Khorenatsi II.14; cf. Arm. *arcat* 'silver' < *arg'-); Aram defeats his third mythic adversary near Mt. Argaeus in Cappadocia, which is identified with Mt. Harga of the Hittite sources (< *H_2erg'- 'white, silver', see Laroche 1985: 88f.); he represents an etymological counterpart of the first Indian Rāma (Skt. *Paraśurāma* 'Rāma-with-the-axe') who defeats Kārtavīrya Arjuna (< *arg'-) (*Mahābhārata* III 115f.) and corresponds to the Hurrian thunder god Teššub, who has the deity Silver as his adversary (Petrosyan 2002: 43 ff.). He is the father and predecessor of the last divine ruler of Armenia Ara the Handsome.

In Irish tradition, the leader of the people of Danu, the predecessor of Bres the Handsome, is Nuadu, possessed with a magic sword, who came from the Northern islands with a fleet to

Ireland. He lost his hand in the first battle of Mag Tuired against the Fir Bolg and was provided with a silver arm. Thus he was called *Argatlám/Airgetlám* 'Silver hand(ed)' (**arg'-*). Nuadu's counterpart in Welsh tradition is *Lludd Llaw Ereint* 'Lludd of the Silver hand,' whose name is derived from Nudd by alliterative assimilation (*Nudd Llaw Ereint > Lludd Llaw Ereint*). As *Nodons, this deity is known from several sites in Britain, where, in Roman inscriptions, he is identified with Mars, the war god.[3] Lludd/Nudd, as was pointed out, is a son of Beli and a member of the Plant Dôn (note that Nudd and Nuadu represent the anagrams of Dôn and Danu). Of Beli's sons, Lludd was the oldest and after his father's death the kingdom of Britain came into his hands (for Nodons, Nuadu and Llud, see Carey 1984, with references).

The eponym of the Greek counterparts of the Tuatha Dé Danann, Bēlos' son Danaos, has a brother, Aigyptos (eponym of Egypt). The brothers quarrelled, and Danaos took refuge in Argos. Later on, the fifty sons of Aigyptos married the fifty daughters of Danaos. The latter directed his daughters to kill their husbands on the wedding night (Apollodorus II 1.4-5). This Greek myth is close to the Ossetian tradition, where the two opposing clans, counterparts of the Indian Devas and Dānavas, appear as the exogamic groups of the Narts and the Donbettyrs, respectively (**nert-* and **dānu-*). Like Nuadu, Danaos came to Greece from a far country in a ship, and became the king of Argos (**arg'-*; in the *Iliad*, the "Argives", along with the "Danaans", commonly designate the Greek forces opposed to the Trojans). Thus Danaos, son of Bēlos and king of Argos, would correspond to Lludd son of Beli, the 'Silver (**arg'-*) hand'.

In Manetho's *Egyptian History*, fragmentarily extant in later sources, Aigyptos and Danaos are presented as Sethos(is) and Armais, respectively (Jos. Flavius, *Contra Apion* I 15 ff.; Eusebius of Caesaria, *Chronicles* I 215 ff.). This obscure identification makes Danaos comparable with the Armenian Aram and his incarnation Aramayis/Armayis[4] (see Table 2 below).

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[3] Let us mention in passing that the Norse god Týr is another Indo-European deity equated with Mars who lost his hand.

[4] These names, irrespective of their actual etymologies, are assonant with the Indo-European **H₂rHmo-/*armo-* 'hand' (cf. Arm. *armukn* 'elbow', English *arm,* Gall. *aramō* 'bifurcation, point of separation', etc). From this (folk) etymology, considering the association of the hero with **arg'-* 'white, silver',

Table 2

Aram	*Danaos*	*Llud*	*Nuadu*
Eponym of the Armenians, the ruler of Armenia	Eponym of the Danaans, the king of Argos	The king of Britain	The king of the Tuatha Dé Danann
A warlike deity		Identified with Mars	Possessed with a magic sword
Ar(a)mayis is one of the incarnations of Aram	Identified as Armais		
Opposed to the clan of Bel, defeats Baršam (*b'l*)	Son of Bēlos	Son of Beli	His people are opposed to the descendants of Bile
Connected/opposed to **arg'*- 'white, silver'	The king of Argos (**arg'*-)	Called *Llaw Ereint* 'Silver hand'	Called *Argatlám* 'Silver hand'
Succeeded by Ara the Handsome			Succeeded by Bres the Handsome

There is a remarkable affinity between the figures of the Irish and Armenian "handsome" leaders manqué, Ara the Handsome and Bres. The former is identified as one of the ancient Near Eastern young and handsome deities, consorts of the Mother goddess, the Armenian cognate of the Phoenician Adonis, Phrygian Attis and others ("the dying and rising god" according to an outmoded term, see, e.g., Matikian 1930). Furthermore, as previously stated, he is considered a demonstrative example of the "third function" figure. Interestingly, Adonis, Ara the Handsome's cognate, is said to be a son of Theias or Thias, king of Assyria (i.e., a descendant of Bēlos).

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is but one step to the idea of the "silver-handed" god. However, *lām* and *llaw* 'hand' in the names of Argatlam and Llaw Ereint are derived from another stem.

Šamiram, Greek Semiramis, an adversary of Ara the Handsome, is one of the central mythological characters of the Armenians (her name is derived, probably, from the historical queen Šammuramat, wife of the Assyrian King Šamši-Adad V, who ruled in the end of the 9th century BC). In the context of Armenian tradition, she represents the epicised version of the ancient transfunctional goddess, whose character later was split into the three goddesses of the pre-Christian Armenian pantheon (Petrosyan 2007a: 185, 194; see also Abeghian 1975: 156-162).

Bres, or Eochaid (Eochu) Bres, is the son of Elatha, the king of the Fomorians, and a Tuatha Dé Danann woman, whose name coincides with that of Ériu, the eponym of Ireland. After the first battle of Mag Tuired he is chosen to be the king by the urging of women. According to a version of the *First Battle of Mag Tuired*, seven years later Bres dies "after taking a drink while hunting". This is reminiscent of the fate of the Near Eastern "dying gods" killed during boar hunts or by boars (Hor, Tammuz, Adonis, Attis).[5] The story of a young handsome god/hero, counterpart of the "dying god" killed by a boar or during a boar hunt is known in Europe as well (e.g. Germanic Sigfried/Sigurðr, Irish Diarmaid, see respectively Schröder 1960: 119 ff.; A. H. Krappe *apud* Rees & Rees 1961: 295).

In the *Second Battle of Mag Tuired* Bres is described as a man who lacked the characteristics of being a good king, and, after reigning for seven years, was cursed, expelled and replaced by Nuadu who was cured. Bres appeals for assistance from the Fomorians to take back the kingship. The Fomorian leader, Balor of the Evil Eye, agrees to help him and raises a huge army. Bres is found alive in the aftermath of the battle, and is spared on the condition that he advises the Tuatha Dé about agriculture, and, for a while, he appears as an agricultural divinity.

Bres' wife is the goddess Brigit, who is also reminiscent of the "dying god's" consort the "mother goddess". In the Celtic

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[5] In Armenian tradition, Ara the Handsome, as the final figure of the epic of the creation of Armenia, corresponds to King Artawazd, the final hero of the early Armenian epic *Vipasank'* of Artaxiad period (second-first centuries BC), another incarnation of the "dying god" who perished while going to a boar (and wild asses) hunt (Khorenatsi II 61; regrettably, the word *boar* is omitted in R. Thomson's English translation); for a late version of the myth of Ara the Handsome, in this context, see Petrosyan 2002: 112.

world, in the form of Brigantia, she is equated with the Roman Victoria, Caelestis and Minerva. According to *Cormac*'*s Glossary*, Brigit was a set of triplet goddesses, daughters of the Dagda, all of the same name: a goddess of poetry, a goddess of smith-work, and a goddess of healing (Stokes 1868: 23).

Thus she is well comparable with Šamiram, an heir to a transfunctional goddess, whose character split into three goddesses. Brigit is regarded as the inventor of keening (Rees & Rees 1961: 30) which is reminiscent of the mourning figure of the goddess, a consort of the "dying god" (see Table 3 below).

Table 3.

Ara the Handsome	Bres the Handsome
Ruler of Armenia	King of the Tuatha Dé Danann
Successor to a ruler connected/opposed to **arg'*-	Successor of a king associated with **arg'*-
Object of sexual desire of a goddess	Husband of a goddess
Ruler manqué	Ruler manqué
Third function divinity	Third function divinity
Cognate of heroes killed during boar hunts	In one version dies during a hunt

4. Consideration

There are several levels of the Armenian and Celtic correspondences considered above, including typological, Indo-European, Ancient Near Eastern, biblical, and Greek. Below I will discuss some Indo-European, Ancient Near Eastern, and Greek associations.

Anonym emphasises the ethnogonic role of Hayk's eldest son Aramaneak/Aramenak/Armenak, from which one can conclude that he, contrary to Khorenatsi, considered him the eponym of the ethnonym *Armen* (Sargsyan 1998: 123). However, Aramaneak, as the first Haykid settler of Ayrarat, the central province of Armenia, and its core plain, is the first eponym of this area. On the other hand, Ayrarat is said to be named after Ara the Handsome and is otherwise called "The Field of Ara". Thus, Aramaneak, as the second eponym of Armenia and the first eponym of Ayrarat can be regarded as a conflation of the name Aram with the Indo-European eponymous **aryomen*-, i.e., he may represent the Armenian cognate of the Irish Eremon, the first Irish leader in Ireland (note

that *aryo- would yield Arm. *ayr*-). Notably, Aramaneak represents the "Mitraic" aspect of the Dumézil's first function (Ahyan 1981: 264 f.; Dumézil 1994: 133) and thus actually corresponds to the heirs of *aryomen- (Petrosyan 2002: 82 ff.; for *aryomen- and his "Mitraic" heirs, including Eremon, see Puhvel 1981: 324 ff.). No doubt, the name of Ara(y) the Handsome may also be somehow associated with this complex.

Ind. *Bali*, Arm. *Bel*, Gk. *Bēlos*, Norse *Beli* and Celtic *Beli/Bile* cannot be related in the Indo-European context. Armenian and Norse forms lack the regular soundshift, which may point to the late origin of their names. However, the comparison of Indian Bali and Welsh Beli may allude to a protoform *beli-, and chronologically pointing to a post-Proto-Indo-European, yet rather oldish age. *Beli Mawr* 'Great Beli', the father of the children of Dôn, the ruler of the Otherworld, is most likely comparable with *Mahabali* 'Great Bali', the son of Dānu, the leader of the Dānavas and the ruler of the Otherworld. The reconstruction of IE *b is improbable, thus the name is to be borrowed from another language.

Bel and Bēlos of the Armenian and Greek myths are derived, undoubtedly, from the Semitic *b'l* 'lord'. The association of the Celtic Beli/Bile with Dôn/Danu and Indic Bali with Dānu make them inseparable from Bēlos, the father of Danaos. Thus, whatever the source of the Celtic Beli/Bile might have been, this figure was identified or conflated with the Semitic *b'l* 'lord'.[6]

In Indo-European traditions, the Semitic *b'l* might have been equated with the Indo-European homophonic stems in folk-etymological association. The textual examination shows that the transparently Semitic Bel in Armenian tradition has been associated with two homophonic Indo-European stems: *bhel- 'to blow, swell' and *bhel- 'to shine; white' (see respectively Harutyunyan 2000: 231 and Petrosyan 2002a). Interestingly, the Celtic god Belenos (identified with Apollo), who sometimes is regarded as the early counterpart of Beli and Bile, and Balor, who, due to the homophony of his name, could have been conflated with the otherworldly figure of Beli/Bile, among the number of other

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[6] This could have resulted from the early contacts of the Indo-Europeans and Semites (Petrosyan 2007). In theory, the figure of Celtic/Germanic Beli may also be interpreted on the basis of Theo Venneman's hypothesis of the "European Semites."

etymologies, are also derived from those stems (for Belenos, see Pokorny 1959: 118 ff.; for Beli and Bile: Kondratiev 1998; Kalygin 2006: 32 ff.; Fomin 1996, with bibliography; cf. De Vries 2006: 75 f.; for Balor: Tsymbursky 1987).

The myths of the black and white or dark and fair contrast, codified frequently by the stems **rēmo-* and **arg'-*, respectively, are prominent in Indo-European mythologies (Petrosyan 2002). In Armenian myths, the great native heroes and their adversaries are frequently associated with the "black" and the "white", respectively; sometimes, the black heroes alternate with the white ones. Bel and his second representation Baršam/Baršamin, as mentioned above, are implicitly or explicitly associated with the "white". Aram, the epic transposition of the thunder god, is etymologised in connection with the Indic epic heir of the thunder god Rāma 'black', and similar to the first of the Rāmas, Paraśurāma, is opposed to the white, **arg'-*. Sanasar, the thunder god's incarnation in the *Daredevils of Sasun*, is also a demonstrative "black hero", identified with the black raincloud ("A black cloud came from Sasun, a rain came down from it and soaked the city", he says about his deed of killing the dragon, see Abeghian 1966: 417). Thus, he corresponds to the Indian thunder god Parjanya 'the Raincloud' who is frequently identified with Indra. Aram's son Ara the Handsome is associated with the "white" (Petrosyan 2001; 2002: 83, 112).

Beli, even regardless of his etymology, would have been associated with "white". It is attested that in the Welsh tradition, the rulers of the Otherworld are explicitly connected with "white" (Squire 1975: 279). Lludd and Nuadu are "silver handed", while Nuadu's great sword, his hand substitute, came from the city of Findias ('White'). In several Irish genealogies, Nuadu is succeeded by Finn ('White'), while Nudd's son is called Gwyn ('White'; the cognate of Irish Finn). This feature is derived from Nodons, whose characteristics are inherited by the two figures, the father and the son: Nuadu/Nudd and Finn/Gwyn (Carey 1984).

However, Nuadu and his people, similar to Sanasar, are associated with the clouds. In the *Second Battle of Mag Tuired*, the Tuatha Dé Danann upon reaching Ireland burned their ships (so that they would not think of fleeing to them). The smoke and the mist filled the land; therefore it has been thought that they arrived in the clouds of mist (also, they "spread showers and fog-sustaining shower-

clouds", see Squire 1975: 72). One of the etymologies of Nuadu/Nudd/Lludd associates him with Cymric *nudd* 'haze, mist' (Pokorny 1959: 978; Carey 1984: 2 f.). Note also that the great sword of Nuadu is comparable with the "Lightning Sword", the most significant attribute of Sanasar.

   The considered Celtic myths are noticeably close to the Greek ones. While in the majority of myths the clans eponymised by the cognates of the Indic Bali and Dānu figure as the opponents of the native gods and heroes, in Greek and Celtic traditions the roles are inverted: the Danaans are Greeks who fight against the Trojan foreigners, the Tuatha Dé Danann and Children of Dôn are native deities, while Beli and Bile figure as ancestors of the native kings and people of Wales and Ireland.[7] The "positive" roles of the Greek Danaans and the Celtic Tuatha Dé Danann, which differentiate them from their Indo-European counterparts, might be interpreted by analogy of the opposite roles that the Devas as gods and devils take on in the Vedic Indian and the Avestan Iran traditions, respectively. However, the name of Nyniaw, son of Welsh Beli, which seems to be inseparable from Ninos and Ninyas, descendants of Bēlos, shows that the Welsh Beli was confused with the late, pseudo-historic figure of Bēlos of the Greek tradition. The myth of the young and handsome "third function" divinity, object of sexual desire/consort of a goddess, is most characteristic for the Eastern Mediterranean mythologies. Taking into account the evident closeness of the figures of Ara and Bres, particularly, succession of a ruler associated with IE **arg'*-, one may conclude that the two figures are derived from a particular, Indo-Europeanised version of a Near Eastern myth.[8]

   Celtic tribes invaded the Balkans in the first quarter of the third century BC. Three of them migrated to north-central Anatolia and established a long-lived Celtic territory to the east of Phrygia, which became known as Galatia. One of those tribes inhabited the area of

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[7] Another specific Greco-Celtic (Danaan-Tuatha Dé Danan) correspondence is the affinity between the myth of Perseus, the son of Danaē, who kills the evil-eyed Medusa and his own grandfather Akrisios, on the Greek side, and that of the god Lug of the Tuatha Dé, who kills Balor of the Evil Eye, his own grandfather, on the Irish side.

[8] According to one of the Classical Greek mythographers, after Adonis died, the mourning Aphrodite found him at "Cypriote Argos", in a shrine of Apollo (see Nagy 1990: 229). Likewise, in folk tradition, Ara was killed in Arzni (ancient Arcni < **arg'*-), at the foot of Mt. Ara to the north of the Ararat Plain (Petrosyan 2002: 83).

Pessinous, the Phrygian city sacred to Attis and his consort mother goddess. It is believed that the Galatians had taken over the supervision of the cult of Attis.[9] It is there, in the west of Asia Minor, that the kings Bēlos and Ninos of Lydia, and the epic of the war of the Danaan Greeks against Troy are localised, while Atys, the son of the last king of Lydia killed during a boar hunt (Herod. I 43), echoes the figure of Attis. The historic name Αρμαις is attested from Lycia (a neighbouring country to Lydia and Phrygia in the west of Asia Minor, see Howink ten Cate 1961: 132). The identification of Danaos, son of Bēlos, as Armais, would also occur, probably, in the west of Asia Minor. The Lycian *Armais* is almost identical with the Armenian *Ar(a)mayis*, which could have been borrowed from a related Anatolian source and conflated with Aram later (Djahukian 1981: 52 f.; Petrosyan 2009b: 68 f.). This name is derived from the Anatolian *arma-* 'moon, moon god'. The association of the moon with silver and *$*H_2erg'*-$* is prevalent, which may explain the identification of Danaos with Armais (*Arma-* 'moon' : *$*H_2erg'*-$* = Danaos : Argos).

Thus, one may suppose that some of the Celtic mythologems considered above may had been formed as a result of contact between the Celtic tribes and the peoples of the Balkans and Anatolia and then passed onto other regions of the Celtic world.

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[9] Although his eunuch followers, known as Galli, most probably, had nothing to do with the Gauls, see Bremmer 2004.

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